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Editorial

1. COVID-19; official statistics during a pandemic

With the drafting of this editorial at the beginning of May 2020, COVID-19 information and COVID statistics are an almost normal element in our daily life. After in January worrying messages came from China, in less than three months the raging of the pandemic has gripped the whole world and is in full swing to – as it seems – change it drastically. Bound to the television, internet and newspapers we have been following the epidemiological information, curves with rates and numbers of measured, registered and estimated infections, persons hospitalised and deceasing supported with dramatic images of overcrowded hospitals and empty streets. As statisticians we were of course eager to find behind the at the beginning of the pandemic still scarce flat epidemiological figures detailed and accurate statistical information that could more exactly show the justification for the lockdowns. Decisions at the entrances of hospitals concerning the special treatment of people suspected of being infected were illustrated with first statistical interpretations of the effects of the growing numbers on the sustainability of health systems and on the health related business, national and world wide. Extra attention on negative impacts of globalisation resulted from the fast emerging problem of regionally lacking medical equipment. With the enduring lockdown restrictions the worrying messages about its impact on the global economy and specific sectors got even more at the forefront. Next level of messages relevant for current and future official statistics were those on the size of budgetary support packages, necessary to avoid a total breakdown of industries, and to help national and international concerns like the aviation with huge sums of loans, as well on a national level financial support to groups of self-employed, employees and small shop owners and businesses specifically hit by the lockdown, to survive in their daily business. With at the moment of drafting this editorial a lowering of the lockdown restrictions in China and some of the Western European countries, more detailed economic and social statistical information shows up in the politically driven evaluations of the correctness of the lockdown and similar decisions taken by the governments at the first signs of the outbreak.

The COVID-19 crisis will have an enormous impact on global wealth. Positive social economic developments from recent years, especially in poorer countries, risk to be stopped or even reversed, and a strong increase of people in poverty and in need for help is expected. A recovery of the hard-hit economies in many countries will costs a lot of energy and budget. It will be a huge challenge to let all this happen in good balance with for example other important policy aims like the fight against climate change.

The crisis showed the vulnerability of many systems, in health, education etc. For official statistics it pointed among others to the weak coordination between domains of involved statistics, to the lack of timeliness of official data, to incomplete and erroneous statistics and to the opportunity this crisis gave to fake and purposely misleading statistics popping up.

Though, the reaction by societies on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic shows that there is an enormous creativity in organising daily life in times of crises, for example on dealing with work from home, on school systems supported by all kind of ICT applications, all these solutions making society aware that many things in daily life can and have to be differently organised in the near future. The reaction of society also showed the value of new types of data and information and new applications, making us faster and better understand the developments.

In the months and years to come official statistics, national, international and on low regional level, will become more important than they have ever been in eg monitoring the social and economic developments, helping policy makers to decide what are the best policies to dig countries out of recession in balance with fighting climate change and in supporting other countries and regions. Integrated data sets and indicators that help to monitor all such aspects in their interrelation will be severely needed to provide policy makers with dashboards for steering their policy choices. It is of utmost importance to have a consistent set of indicators that will help to monitor the developments. The Sustainable Development Goals indicator set is such an indicator set, and it is now even more important to have this filled in with reliable data by taking also into account opportunities of new data sources and measurements. The COVID-19 pandemic is related to a lot of domains of official statistics.[1] This crisis of unknown and never before experienced proportions not only illustrates the usefulness and need of currently available statistics, but it will also lead to a huge change in how we think about and can produce statistics. The 'new normal' will have impact on data collection and on methodologies, but also on the type of data needed. Not only health and epidemiological statistics, but the whole set of social, economic and business statistics will be needed.

A crisis like COVID-19 is first and for all a dramatic event, but it will also give opportunities to quickly realise the necessary adaptations to our official statistics systems.

It is regrettable that the important messages from the census special of the Journal (Vol 36, Nr 1) launched in March 2020, were overtaken by the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion on the Population and Housing Census round 2020 was launched in the expectation that colleagues involved in census taking would be interested to contribute. But the pandemic exploding in Western Europe exactly in the middle of March has understandably taken over the attention. Due to the pandemic in many countries censuses had to be delayed, postponed and even totally cancelled, even when the need for complete population information is widely recognised. Considering this changing environment we found it justified and necessary to launch immediately a discussion on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for official statistics (www.officialstatistics.com). At the moment of drafting this Editorial 25 comments contribute to a very useful discussion building on a statement by Walter Radermacher (*Crisis, politics and statistics. Official Statistics in the context of the COVID-19 crisis,* see discussion platform at: www.officialstatistics.com). The four first articles in this issue, drafted in a very short time, describing elements of the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of official statistics, also aim to contribute to this discussion.

[1] An illustration of this relation of the pandemic with many domains of statistics is 'How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective', as prepared by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA). https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ccsa/documents/covid19-report-ccsa.pdf.

2. Four COVID-19 manuscripts

The four manuscripts in this issue on COVID-19, cover very different elements of this multi dimensional development. Len Cook and Alistair Gray in '*Official statistics in the search for solutions for living with COVID-19 and its consequences*' describe, drawing on experiences in New Zealand with the focus on aspects which have general applicability in other countries, the effect of the outbreak and his personal views on how official statistics will need to change and foreshadows the range of influences on the context for which official statistical offices and international organisations need to plan for. The central thrust of the paper is that national statistical offices need to be thinking now about the huge medium- and long-term influences that will shape what they need to change in their work. They will not be immune from the fiscal pressures placed on governments, which will make not only existing programmes vulnerable, but may prevent initiatives that might now be critical.

Complementing the manuscript from Cook and Gray, Olav Ljones focusses in his contribution '*Pandemic and Official Statistics; some comments on recent COVID-19 experiences*', on the main characteristics of the statistics needed for a proper description of a virus outbreak like COVID-19, the data gaps and the leaks in the cooperation between epidemiological and 'normal' official health and demographic statistics.

Public health systems and policymakers need accurate and timely information about the development and behaviour of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak to appropriately respond to this ongoing public health emergency. Citizens and policymakers expect data disclosed by official authorities to have the highest quality standards and to be accurate and reliable. Ashfin Ashofteh, and Jorge M. Bravo ('*A study on the quality of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) official datasets*'), analyse and compare the quality of three official datasets available for COVID-19. They apply comparative statistical analysis to evaluate the accuracy of data collection by a national and two international organisations based on the value of systematic measurement errors. The findings show measurement errors in these three datasets and the necessity of some corrections to augment the quality of the data used for planning and implementing policy interventions. The study suggests caution for using the mentioned datasets and provides a combined dataset with minimum systematic measurement errors.

Finally Jean-luc Tavernier in his contribution '*INSEE Operations during the Lockdown Period*; shows how since the beginning of the lockdown period in France, INSEE managed to reorganise its work to ensure the continuity of its missions, thanks to widespread teleworking and the adaptation of certain household surveys from face-to-face interviews to telephone interviews. INSEE has also provided new output relevant both to the decision-makers and to the public, using partly new data sources (such as aggregated credit card transactions or mobile phone data) and new techniques (mainly nowcasting) to shed light on the evolution of the French economic situation as well as on the evolution of the present population in the regions and the development of the mortality rate. Surely the manner INSEE reacted is anecdotical for how many of the NSO's all over the world will react or have reacted.

3. What further to find in this issue?

Beyond the four COVID-19 articles this very rich issue is built on some 10 different sections. After the contribution on the history of ISI and on the Strategy 2019–2021 for the IAOS, 25 articles deal with a variety of topics ranging from new data sources, fake data, to indicators for SDG's, informal employment and cross-border data sources for national accounts.

4. The ISI World Statistics Conference in Kuala Lumpur

From 18–23 August 2019 the 62th ISI World Statistics Conference (ISI, WSC) took place in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). This well organised conference created, beyond good occasions for networking and content-full side meetings, very good academic sessions with a great variety of papers, presentations and posters. In this and in following issues of the Journal many of the manuscripts resulting from the 2019 ISI WSC will be presented.

We open this series with a rather special manuscript by Jean-Louis Bodin: '*A view on 50 years of life of the ISI, with a focus on ISI relations with official statistics*'. Bodin describes how he attended the World Statistics Conferences from 1969 (the 37th Conference) onwards as official statistician, only missing two congresses during these 50 years. The paper focuses on the important role of the congress in the domain of official statistics and especially presents some issues that have marked the life of the ISI for the past few decades, like the Declaration on professional ethics in 1985 and creation of the Advisory Board on Ethics in 2010. Other issues that marked its life as described by Bodin are the role in defending the integrity of statistics, the contribution of the ISI to drafting the UN Declaration on Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in 1991, the strengthening of statistical capacities in developing countries and the role of statistics in the Data Revolution. One of the other elements that Bodin describes in his contribution is the creation within the ISO of some sections (now associations) dealing with some aspects of official statistics: IASS in 1973 (surveys), the Irving Fisher Committee in 1997 (central banks statistics) and especially the IAOS in 1985, for whom this Journal functions as the flagship publication.

5. The IAOS Strategy 2019–2021, by John Pullinger President of the IAOS

The SJIAOS is the flagship for the IAOS and it is more than obvious that IAOS members and audience relevant for the official statistics are aware of and involved in the IAOS strategy. In presenting '*The IAOS Strategy 2019–2021*' John Pullinger as current president of the IAOS, describes how in this critical time for our community the need for trustworthy numbers to guide decision making is everywhere evident. He mentions how the opportunities arising from new data sources, technologies and methods are tantalising. And pointing to the unique place of IAOS, both in upholding the centrality of official statistics to effective democracy and in calling out those who seek to undermine it and seduce others to ignore evidence and instead rely on anecdote, whim or populist rhetoric. The new IAOS strategy for 2019–2021 builds on the progress from recent years with a centrepiece of the strategy the themes for the IAOS 2020 conference mirroring the wider ambitions of the Association over the next decade: official statistics for better lives.

6. Pre-release access of official statistics: Does it conflict with independence and impartiality?

'Pre-release access of official statistics', the item for the fourth discussion on the discussion platform (www.officialstatistics.com) contains four manuscripts. These are based on paper from a session with the same title held at the ISI WSC 2019 in Kuala Lumpur.

Equal access of official statistics to users *at the same time* is broadly recognised as best practice for adhering to the statistical principles of professional independence and of impartiality and objectivity. The United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics indicate that under the very first principle of "Relevance, impartiality and equal access". However, practice varies across and within countries, with pre-release practiced widely: pre-release access by government and pre-release access by the press. This is usually justified as enhancing the information for the public when statistics are officially released. However, does even advertised pre-release access by policy makers preclude the possibility of pressure (or the perception thereof) on the independent production of statistics to serve political/policy interests? Is pre-release to government impartial when it gives at least a head start to the party in power relative to its opposition? Does pre-release access by the press adequately protect the level playing field for market participants, and does not lead to profiteering by some? Do the benefits of pre-release outweigh the costs associated with the risks? Is there a need for strengthening the existing movement away from pre-release access and a tightening of the guidelines in codes of practice for official statistics?

In the leading paper for this session, by Andreas Georgiou '*Pre-release access to official statistics is not consistent with professional ethics*', an exhaustive overview is provided of arguments for and against pre-release access to official statistics by the government and/or the press, recalling issues like the 'public interest' but also the inconsistency of pre-release with the first principles of statistical ethics: impartiality, objectivity, independence.

Georgiou argues that pre-release is actually a potent enabling condition for undermining the integrity of official statistics and undercutting the public's trust in these statistics. It serves as a vehicle for unfair gains – whether political, economic, or career. Prerelease access is not necessary either for policy conduct or for the public's understanding of the statistics; there are appropriate substitutes. Based on these he recommends complete elimination of prerelease access by both the government in power and members of the press, and advocates that contradictions in codified principles regarding prerelease access under the principle of impartiality must also be addressed.

The statements for the fourth discussion (see the end of this Editorial) on the discussion platform (www.officialstatistics.com) are taken from this manuscript by Andreas Georgiou.

In participating in the session at the ISI WSC Marjo Bruun and Heli Mikkelä ("*Pre-release and embargo – no, they don't exist" – The release practices of data in the changing data ecosystem*' discuss the nature of release practices, the ways to support the users of statistical information, and the challenges the statistical offices are facing in the complex data ecosystem. The focus on the situation in Finland where the simultaneous release of new statistical information to all users has been widely accepted and is currently considered "the norm". Being as principle well accepted and respected they show how the issue of release practices in current times is growing more multidimensional with a changing data ecosystem and roles of statistical offices. They ask the important question, on what kinds of rules and principles are to be applied in case of data deliveries or analyst services, or other products not recognised as official statistics?

Dennis Trewin in his '*Discussant comments on pre-release access to official statistics*' takes a somewhat contrary view to that there should be no pre-release. He states on his experience from Australia and New Zealand that it is fine to have some limited pre-release to media and/or government but it has to be managed very carefully so that the integrity of official statistics is maintained: any pre-release arrangements should nevertheless be limited, well-justified, controlled and publicised.

The third supporting paper by Giorgio Alleva and Marina Gandolfo ('*Pre-release access to official statistics: the deep difference between privilege access to government and to media*') argues that equal access to official statistics by users is an important pillar for impartiality and independence. They state that pre-release access reserved to government, independently of motivations and the time of anticipation, is always to be excluded. However, they see a specific situation in how to deal with the need to provide information to the government in advance of the release calendar in case of urgency? In the paper, cases of appropriate pre-release access and secure "lockup" facility experiences in Istat, the Italian NSO, are presented as a possible way to deal with this problem.

7. Official statistics in the future informational ecosystem; User orientation, profound knowledge and science for a future-oriented strategy

A series of manuscripts in the Journal on the 'The future role of Official Statistics in the informational ecosystem' was introduced in the December 2019 issue (Vol 35/4) with the opening article '*Governing by the numbers; Statistical Governance Reflections on the future of official statistics in a digital and globalised society*' (Radermacher, Vol 35/4, pp. 519–538). This opening article was supported by two specific articles (Lehtonen, Vol 35/4, pp. 539-548, and Rancourt, Vol 35/4, pp. 549–558).

In this issue (Vol 36/2) this series on 'Data4Policy' will be continued with five more articles. Jean-Guy Prévost "*Past, present and future of Canadian statistics*" explores this research question for Canadian statistics from the advent of modern Canada in 1867. Hermann Habermann and Thomas A. Louis "*Can the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Political Process Co-exist?*" describe the relevant aspects of the United States federal statistical system considering examples where professional independence has been compromised or threatened. John Pullinger "*Trust in official statistics and why it matters?*" explores some enduring aspects of the way we as human beings interact with numbers and gives a historical perspective on how this became manifest in official statistics. He highlights the essential role of the National Statistical Institute as a trustworthy servant of democracy within the evolving data ecosystem and explains why this matters. The manuscript by Jean-Louis Bodin, "*A view on 50 years of life of the ISI*" can be added to this circle of authors and contributions with his very personal review of 50 years of international statistics. Two other, somewhat different contributions complement this set in this issue, they analyse present cases of co-production of statistics and society: Len Cook "*Evidence, accountability and legitimacy: The oversight of child welfare services*" investigates the specific case of child welfare services in New Zealand, and Walter Bartl and Christian Papilloud "*Measuring "Equivalent Living Conditions"? The Use of Indicators in German Federal Spatial Planning*" investigate the specific use of indicators in the policy field of federal spatial planning in Germany. In the sub-editorial, opening this new set of articles, Walter Radermacher introduces the five articles more in detail.

8. Where are the boundaries of Official Statistics?

The following three manuscripts in this issue are based on presentations given at a ISI WSC 2019 session, jointly organised by the Statistical Office of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The session addressed some frequently – recurring questions related to the different roles and delimitations in the National Statistical Systems (NSS) (e.g. data providers, other producers of Official Statistics, National Central Banks, users of Official Statistics, etc.).

Responsibility for statistics at the level of the European Union is shared between the European Commission (Eurostat) and the European Statistical System (consisting of the national statistical institutes) on the one hand and the Central Bank (ECB) and the European System of Central Banks at the other hand.

The first manuscript ('*Boundaries and coordination of the National Statistical System (NSS)*') by Volkert Taube describes the involvement besides the NSO of different and sometimes numerous actors in the production and dissemination of official Statistics on a national level. He states that even when there are many well known organisational frameworks that aim at clarifying and facilitating coordination amongst different producers of data and statistics, since the organisation of National Statistical Systems (NSS) varies considerably between the poles of centralisation and decentralisation, the different roles of data producers and various producers of Official Statistics, as well as the coordination of collaboration, is often far from being unambiguously understood.

Aurel Schubert ('*Central bank statistics as part of official statistics – The case of the European System of Central Bank (ESCB)*'), addresses the rationale, the legal basis as well as the practical organisation of the so-called "twin-towers" approach of European statistics, with central bank statistics well inside the boundaries of official statistics in Europe. The topic of such a close cooperation between central banks and statistical institutes in the area of producing official statistics becomes more important. Schubert describes the respective fields of competences, and their distribution based on comparative advantages, as well as the – growing – areas and forms of cooperation, and current challenges, specific for central bank statistics but also those (many) that are common to both systems. A special emphasis is given to the role of statistics for modern central banking ("evidence – based policy making"), in the areas of monetary policy, financial stability as well as banking supervision. Conclusions after 20 years of experience with this approach are drawn at the end.

An example of the organisation of a national statistical system following the lines as sketched in the two earlier manuscripts is given by Anahit Safyan and Stephan Mnatsakanyan in '*Where are the boundaries of official statistics?*'. They argue that how to arrange effectively the organisation of different administrative bodies in a society must often be reconsidered and depends to a large extent on the goals to be achieved. Because of the impact of globalisation, today more than ever, there is a need for comprehensive and targeted information about all kinds of economic, social, environmental and other aspects that shape our daily lives and this is where official statistics as a genuine information source for political decision makers and society as a whole come into play.

9. New data sources and official statistics as protection to fake news

During the ISI WSC in Kuala Lumpur there were several sessions focussing on new data sources. Siu-Ming Tam and Gemma Van Halderen, show in '*The five V's, seven virtues and ten rules of big data engagement for official statistics*' how, faced with increasing demands from users of official statistics, declining budgets, and coupled with the increasing supply of new data sources, national statistical offices (NSOs) are attracted to using these new sources for the production of official statistics. In this manuscript they suggest ten rules, seven of which are considered as non-negotiable and the remaining three as essential for taking account of when NSOs are considering to engage for such new sources.

As argued already in the COVID-19 introduction, fake news appeared in many of the COVID-19 information. Hans-Vigo Sæbø, Richard Ragnarsøn and Trine Westvold ('*Statistics as a safeguard against fake news*') describe in the context of the rapidly changing demand for new and more statistics and new possibilities in terms of new data and data sources how all this has led to competition from new producers and communicators of statistics – actors that not always fulfil the requirements traditionally put on statistical institutes and their statistics. They especially argue on the role of official statistics in protecting against fake news based on statistics. This is done by discussing and answering the following questions: What are the requirements to official statistics? How should this concept be defined and communicated? How can one ensure that official statistics comply to these requirements, also such statistics produced outside the national statistical institutes? Professional independence and impartiality are key issues in this context.

10. Indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals

The indicators for the SDG's are one of the most important topics in the current debates in official statistics. In the IAOS strategy publishing in the SJIAOS on the development of and progress in the SDG indicators is seen as an important target. In this issue several manuscripts focus directly or indirectly on the SDG's or on related aspects.

The first contribution by Jillian Campbell, Jay Neuner and Linda See ('*The role of combining national official statistics with global monitoring to close the data gaps in the environmental SDGs*',) describes from a United Nations Environment (UNEP) point of view how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have elevated the profile of the environmental dimension of development, but moreover how they have also challenged national statistical systems and the global statistical community to put in place both the methodologies and mechanisms for data collection and reporting on environmental indicators. The authors state that according to a recent analysis, there is too little data to formally assess the status of two-thirds of the environment-related SDGs. A reason for this seems that many environment-related indicators were not part of the purview of national statistical systems and did not have a methodology or data collection system in place prior to the adoption of the SDG indicator framework. In this context UN Environment is establishing methodologies and mechanisms to collect country-level data, not only via traditional sources but via exploring new data sources, such as data from citizen science and global modelling. In their contribution the authors elaborate on these two approaches, showing their strong and weak points and challenges.

In '*The Interlinkages Between the SDG Indicators and the Differentiation between EU Countries: It is (mainly) the Economy!*' Jean-Pierre Cling, Sylvie Eghbal-Teherani, Mathieu Orzoni and Claire Plateau describe the dashboard involving 100 SDG indicators, structured along the SDGs and adapted to the EU context and policies. The interlinkages between the indicators and the integrated nature of the SDGs was from the beginning a prerequisite to achieve these goals. Based on the scores of these 100 indicators they apply Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to measure the interlinkages between indicators and distinguish three main groups of economic and social indicators: income/poverty; health; education/employment. A fourth category is seen regarding governance. Using the scores on the PCA they identify via a Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (HCA) two groups of countries within the EU: On the one hand, the countries of Western and Northern Europe, and on the other, the countries of East and Southern Europe. The segmentation between EU countries is directly related to their economic development level.

Based on Macro Economic Imbalance policy (MIP) indicators Rosa Ruggeri Cannata, Fabio Bacchini and Elena Doná, ('*Economic and social convergences across European countries: could Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure indicators shed some light?*') apply a multivariate analysis based on 2007 and 2014 data to investigate possible increases in dissimilarities among European countries when looking at the same time at economic, employment and social indicators. MIP indicators are a harmonised set of indicators across European countries potentially able to monitor both economic and social developments. They argue that the economic and financial crises have reinforced divergence across countries, with the presence of a core and a periphery subset related to Southern countries.

The article '*Is Wealth driving the Income Distribution? – An Analysis on the Linkage between Income and Wealth between 1995 and 2016 in Finland*', by Ilja Kavonius focuses on analysing the role of financial wealth in the generation of income and how it is reflected in the income distribution between households. This article starts from Piketty's assumption that we are living in an era of exceptionally narrow income distribution and that due to the increase of financial as well as inherited property, we are entering an era of increasing income distribution. To scrutinise this statement Kavonius uses a data framework based on national balance sheets combined with the related income flows in the household sector linked with income distribution data. The interesting outcome for Finland is that even though financial wealth in relation to the common wage development has almost doubled, the rates of return have almost halved. Additionally, as the part of the property income flows are received by other economic sectors than the households, the distribution of primary income, i.e. income before redistribution, of different income deciles has not changed significantly in the past twenty years.

11. Information and Communication Technology statistics

In their contribution *('Estimating State Level ICT Indicators from Household Surveys in Brazil')*, Isabela Coelho, Marcelo Pitta and Pedro Luis Silva, describe the increasing availability of new data sources raised by new technologies such as Big Data. Some indicators are regularly produced by official and public statistics organisations, This article compares four Small Area Estimation (SAE) methods to produce state level estimates for two selected ICT indicators using two editions (2014 and 2015) of the Survey on Information and Communication Technologies in Brazilian Households (ICT Households Survey).

In the complementing article Mayra Santos, Marcelo Pitta and Denise Silva ('*Indicators for the Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Brazilian Households*') assess the representativeness of the sample for the ICT Households Survey. They employ the R-indicator methodology to determine whether, in the planning stage, the sample would produce estimates with good precision for unplanned domains, such as federative units. The results of the estimated indicators revealed that the respondent and planned samples of the ICT Households survey can be considered representative for Brazil and for major region levels. At the federative unit level, however, there is evidence of a gap between the planned and respondent samples and the target population.

12. Official statistics in the business data arena

The manuscript '*The future role of official statistics in the business data arena*', by Stefano Menghinello, Alessandro Faramondi and Tiziana Lauretti aims at identifying the most promising avenues to maintain and possibly increase the relevance of Official Statistics in the competitive and globally interconnected business data arena. They argue that a successful approach should be based upon selective strategies with a strong cooperative attitude towards other institutional and private actors engaged in the production of business data. Via analysing Global Value Chains they identify possible strengths and weaknesses along all stages of the statistical production process set up and maintained by NSIs in order to exploit the "value added" of data produced by official statistics as compared to other data sources. For increasing both the efficiency and flexibility of statistical production processes they see as promising ways to proceed the adoption of a register based approach and more active data dissemination strategies This article is clearly an appetiser for the special for the September issue of the Journal (Vol 36, Nr 3), on the Future of Economic and Business statistics.

13. Informal employment

'Methods of Statistical Estimation of Circular Migration and Formal and Informal Employment in the Moscow Agglomeration Based on the Integration of Various Data Sources', By Polina Kryuchkova, Filipp Sleznov, Denis Fomchenko, Vladimir Laikam and Igor Zakharchenkov, uses a combination of various data sources, including official statistics, administrative data, and data from mobile operators, as new opportunities for obtaining statistics on circular migration and formal and informal employment estimates to be used at various policy levels including the level of city management. The purpose of their paper is to demonstrate how the use of administrative data together with the mobile operators' data can promptly improve the accuracy and informativeness of statistical indicators of the labor market including on formal and informal employment, circular migration, etc. The population and employment in Moscow and in the Moscow agglomeration are the subjects of this article.

Ruslan Motorynin in '*Adaptation of international recommendations on informal employment in Ukraine (problems of measurement and analysis)*' considers the problems of adaptation of international recommendations on informal employment in Ukraine. The recommendations of the International Labor Organization "Measuring informality: a statistical guide to the informal sector and informal employment" are described, as well as the relevant category and the United Nations System of National Accounts classifications in terms of the possibility of their use in statistical practice of Ukraine.

14. Cross-border data sources for national accounts

Two more articles focus on some more technical statistical issues. Second Bwanakare and Mark Cierpian-Wolan in 'Reconciling *conflicting cross-border data sources for national accounts updating. The cross-entropy econometrics approach*' introduce an efficient approach of combining data from various sources and compare the results of this combination with results based on traditional techniques used in official statistics. In the proposed model they apply the power law-related Kullback-Leibler information divergence method, known to generalise Shannon entropy, to solve nonlinear, ill-posed inverse problems through the Bayesian philosophy, to data from the most important cross-border point between Poland and Germany. They argue that compared with traditional statistics techniques, their method produced a higher level of output significance in the case of Polish balance of payments (BoP) estimation and that, because of the universal character of this procedure, it can improve national accounts estimation, especially for small countries, more sensitive to cross-border processes.

15. International comparison of GDP factors

Ruslan Motoryn, Tetiana Motoryna and Kateryna Prykhodko in *'Using the index method for international comparison of indicators of GDP factors'*, reexamine the conceptual framework of international comparison of the dynamics, structure of GDP and the influence of factors on GDP at the production stage, using the index method and data from the national accounts of Ukraine and Poland for 2014–2016. A three-factor multiplicative model is proposed for this purpose. On this basis were drawn conclusions about and the impact of defining factors on GDP of these countries. This made it possible to compare the effect of individual factors on the GDP of the selected countries.

I wish you pleasant readings of the interesting articles.

I am pleased to also refer you to the Statistical Journal's website (www.officialstatistics.com) with interviews with colleagues in Official Statistics.

16. Some words about the next issues (Volume 36 (2020), Issue 3 and 4)

The next two issues of the journal are already in full preparation. The September 2020 issue (Vol. 36 (2020), Nr. 3) will be a Special issue about the Future of Economic statistics. Some 20 authors confirmed to the Guest Editors Ivo Havinga (UNSD) and Andre Loranger and Greg Peterson (Statistics Canada), their willingness to contribute to this Special.

It is expected that papers from the 2019 ICAS conference in New Delhi, papers prepared for the (cancelled) Quality in Statistics 2020 conference and the World Data Forum 2020, and probably already some manuscripts from the (postponed) IAOS 2020 conference will find their way in the December 2020 issue

(Vol. 36 (2020), Nr. 4). Of course there is always a slot for other manuscripts; authors are kindly invited to submit their manuscript to https://www.iospress.nl/journal/statistical-journal-of-the-iaos/?tab=submission-of-manuscripts.

For Volume 37 (2021) and later guest editorial teams are preparing for a special issue for Statistical Training and Data Science and a special issue on Statistical Capacity Building. You are all kindly invited, not to hesitate, when there is a specific idea for a special or special section or individual article to signal this to me as Editor in Chief.

Finally, see also below, an Extra issue on *Official Statistics in Africa is* in preparation, based on papers prepared for the postponed IAOS 2020 conference.

17. Some managerial issues for the SJIAOS

Advisory Board for SJIAOS

In November 2019 the Executive Committee of the IAOS approved the proposal for installing an Advisory Board for the SJIAOS. This board has two main roles:

- To advise the President of the IAOS and the Editor in Chief of the Journal on the bi-annual strategy for the Statistical Journal (Journal and website), and on the annual reports on the Journal by the Editor in Chief.
- To advise on their request, the President of the IAOS and the Editor in Chief, on ad hoc issues related to content and quality of the manuscripts, the Journal in general and review and revision procedures and the content of the SJIAOS website and discussions.

The Executive Committee agreed with the following membership of this Board for a term of two years: Gemma van Halderen (Thailand/Australia) and Hasnae Fdil (Morocco) representing the ExCo of the IAOS, Kirsten West (USA) and Jaume Garcia (Spain) representing the Editorial board of General and Emphasis Editors for the Journal and Hugues Kouadio (Ivory Coast) and Steve MacFeely (Switzerland/Ireland) representing the group of (potential) authors. Kim Willems (Netherlnds) represents the IOS Press. John Pullinger (President of IAOS) and Pieter Everaers (Editor in Chief) are ex-officio member of the Board. Steve MacFeeley was elected as the first chair of this Board.

18. The IAOS Conference from 19–21 May 2020 in Zambia is postponed, but the Extra issue of the Journal on Official statistics in Africa will go ahead as planned

The bi-annual IAOS Conference planned for 19–21 May to be held in Livingstone, Zambia, has been postponed (new date not yet available at time of preparing this issue) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be the first time of this conference to be held on the African continent. As African official statistics have gone (and are going) through a process of change and fast development the conference was expected to specifically result in contributions from African Statistics and would mark a milestone in Official Statistics for Africa. A special issue of the Journal on '*Official statistics in Africa*' was planned. Potential authors from the African region are specifically invited to contribute to this extra and very special issue of the journal. When the decision to postpone was made the organisation team for the conference was in the phase of selecting the papers and preparing the sessions. Authors have been informed if the paper proposal was expected, at the same time they have been invited – even when the conference is postponed – to go ahead with preparing their paper. To not lose the momentum of abstracts and papers being now prepared or almost ready, the ExCo of the IAOS decided to proceed with preparing the extra issue of the Journal. From the paper proposals that already have been positively selected by the conference organisers the guest editorial team will invite those papers that are found suitable to be transformed in concrete manuscripts for the Journal.

Pieter Everaers
Editor in Chief
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